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## **PRESS CLIPPINGS**

**Office of Program Resources Management**

**(632) 552-9907**

*Thursday, April 17, 2008*

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### **INVESTING IN PEOPLE**

**(Education)**

#### **USAID, Petron donate \$ 2.5 to construct school buildings in Mindanao**

**(Source: Positive News Media Online – Education Section – 4/17/08)**

MANILA, April 17 (PNA)- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Petron Foundation have pledged to construct 120 new public elementary classrooms and rehabilitate 480 others in Mindanao.

USAID and Petron will each donate US \$ 1.25 million for the project that will alleviate the classroom shortage and improve access to basic education in conflict-affected areas of southern Philippines.

U.S. Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney and Petron chairman and chief executive officer Nicasio I. Alcantara finalized the agreement through a signing ceremony at the Petro Building in Makati City on Monday.

Education Undersecretary Ramon C. Bacani witnessed the signing on behalf of the Department of Education (DepEd).

The USAID-Petron partnership will equip new and refurbished classrooms with water and electricity, an average of 25 school desks each, plus teachers' tables and chairs, blackboards, cabinets, fans, clocks, and toilets.

USAID's Education Quality and Access for Learning and Livelihood Skills (EQuALLS) project has conducted an assessment on the need for new classrooms in communities in Mindanao based on current and projected enrollment data in relation to the existing number of classrooms.

The EQuALLS assessment has identified areas for construction and rehabilitation across 35 municipalities and 4 cities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), Region 9 and Region 12.

Bacani has pledged DepED's commitment to maintain the school buildings after the construction and refurbishment. DepEd will also fast-track the hiring of new teachers in Regions 9 and 12 to complement the classroom construction and rehabilitation efforts.

The classroom construction program is one component of the USAID-funded EQuALLS project, which seeks to improve access to basic education for Mindanao's elementary school children and out-of-school youth.

Other EQuALLS project components include training for 24,000 teachers in English proficiency, reading, math and science; functional literacy and livelihood training for 100,000 out-of-school youth; the provision of books and learning materials for elementary schools; and capacity-building for 700 Parent Teacher Community Associations.(PNA)